

REMARKS

A. Drawings

Applicant acknowledges the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, which accompanied the Office Action. This application was initially submitted with informal drawings. Formal patent drawings will be submitted upon Notice of Allowance.

B. Restriction Requirement

Applicant affirms the election without traverse, previously made by telephone, to prosecute the claims of group I, claims 1 - 8. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the non-elected claims in a subsequent timely filed continuation or divisional application.

C. References Cited by Applicant

The examiner states that the references cited by applicant in the Petition to Make Special have been reviewed and that the most relevant patents have been made of record. The examiner further states that applicant should submit a "1449" if it is desired that the remaining patents be officially made of record in this application. Attached hereto pursuant to the examiner's suggestion is an Information Disclosure Statement, including a form "1449" listing all of the patents cited in the Petition to

Make Special. Applicant respectfully requests that these patents be made of record in this case and that, even though the most relevant of these patents have already been considered and made of record, all of the patents listed in the attached IDS be fully considered during prosecution of the present application.

C. Claim Rejections

Claims 5 and 6 have initially been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Canada 484,207 ("Canada"). Claim 6 has been cancelled. Claim 5 has been amended and is believed to define clearly over Canada for the following reasons.

Canada discloses a mop wringer for mounting in a conventional metal pail. The wringer has an articulatable inverted U-shaped handle that extends upwardly out of the pail and that has a roller extending between its two arms at the height of the lip of the pail. An opposing fixed roller is mounted on the wringer. The articulatable handle can be pushed forward to move the rollers apart and pulled back to bring the rollers together. In use, the rollers are parted and the wet mopping yarns of a mop are placed between the rollers. The handle is then pulled back to pinch the mopping yarns between the rollers, whereupon the mopping yarns are pulled upwardly between the rollers to squeeze excess water from the yarns. A spring

clip is mounted to the top portion of the handle and projects rearwardly therefrom. The spring clip serves to hold the mop handle in an upright position roughly aligned with the handle when the pail is carried by the handle (Column 2, line 16 of Canada).

In contrast to the disclosure of Canada, claim 5, as now amended, recites an improvement to a mop bucket and wringer assembly of the type having a wringer assembly with front, back, and side walls forming an upwardly open well for receiving the yarns of a mop and a wringer mechanism in the well for squeezing excess liquid from the moping yarns. The claimed improvement comprises a support projecting forwardly from the front wall, and defining the forward-most extent of the wringer assembly. The support overlies the interior of the mop bucket and is formed with a handle receiving recess disposed substantially at a mid-portion of the front wall of the wringer assembly for receiving and releasably holding the handle of a mop located in the mop bucket in an upright orientation over the mop bucket.

The unique improvement of amended claim 5 is not taught by Canada. In Canada, the wringer assembly does not have a front wall nor does a support project forwardly and define the forward most extent of the wringer assembly. Instead, a simple spring clip mounted to the back of the handle assembly of the wringer. The mop handle is attachable to the clip only when the mop is in

the wringer assembly and not when the mop is in the mop bucket as claimed in claim 5. Further, the mop handle in Canada is not held by the spring clip in an upright orientation over the mop bucket as claimed. Instead, the orientation of the mop handle is dependent upon that of the articulatable handle, since the mop handle is secured to the articulatable handle. In the rest position of the articulatable handle, for example, the mop handle extends at an angle up and back behind the bucket and not over the bucket.

For at least the forgoing reasons, Canada fails to teach or otherwise anticipate the mop bucket and wringer assembly of amended claim 5. Accordingly, claim 5 is believed to be allowable over this reference.

Claim 5 has also initially been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by either Olsson, Schulman, or Robb. Claim 5, as now amended, is believed to define clearly over these references for the following reasons.

Olsson discloses a mop handle stabilizer in the form of a clip that is mounted on the inside rim of a mop bucket. The clip receives the handle of a mop in the bucket to support the handle of the mop and prevent it from flopping over. Olsson discloses that the clip can be retained on the mop handle itself or can be retained on the inside rim of the bucket. The clip of

Olsson is not associated with the wringer assembly of the bucket.

Robb discloses a generally triangular-shaped mop bucket with a static generally cone-shaped wringer basket mounted on the rim of the bucket. The basket depends from a peripheral plate 5 that has a flanged peripheral edge sized and configured to rest on the rim of the mop bucket. The edges of the plate 5 adjacent to where the plate rests on the rim of the bucket are provided with recesses against which a mop handle can rest when the mop is disposed in the mop bucket.

Schulman discloses a static wringer basket that can be mounted on a standard mop bucket. An arcuate metal supporting bar extends part way around the front edge of the wringer basket and is secured to the basket with rivets. The ends of the supporting bar extend over the rim of the bucket and are provided with locking clips to lock the wringer basket onto the bucket. A separate spring clip is secured to the supporting bar (Fig. 3) and is positioned adjacent one of the ends thereof for receiving the handle of a mop resting in the bucket. Schulman also discloses that an indent 20 can be formed in the front of the supporting bar and the wringer basket for aligning the supporting bar and that a mop handle can be rested in this indent if desired.

None of these references teach or anticipate the unique improvement to a mop bucket and wringer assembly as claimed in amended claim 5. For example, none of them teaches a wringer assembly with a front wall and a support projecting forwardly from the front wall and defining the forward-most extent of the wringer assembly. The handle support of Olsson is mounted to the mop bucket and not to the wringer assembly as claimed. In Schulman, a spring clip is fixed to the supporting bar behind the forward-most extent of the wringer basket adjacent the edge of the bucket. Robb discloses recesses formed in the mounting plate of a wringer basket at the edges of a bucket for locating the handle of a mop. There is no support projecting forwardly from the front wall of the wringer assembly as claimed in claim 5. Further, none of these references disclose or suggest a recess formed in such a projecting support with the recess being disposed substantially at a mid-portion of the front wall of the wringer assembly as further claimed in amended claim 5.

Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that claim 5, as now amended, defines clearly over each of the Robb, Olsson, and Schulman references and is in condition for allowances over these references.

Claim 8 has initially been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Robb in view of Schulman. Claim 8 has now been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1 - 3 have initially been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Elkington in view of Robb. Claims 2 and 3 have been cancelled. Claim 1 has been amended and is believed to define over the suggested combination for the following reasons.

Robb has been discussed above. Elkington discloses a relatively modern down press wringer assembly for a mop bucket having pressure plates for squeezing water from the moping yarns of a mop. The examiner suggests that it would be obvious to combine the teachings of Robb with those of Elkington and that such a combination would be productive of applicant's invention.

In contrast to the teachings of these references, claim 1, as now amended, recites a wringer assembly adapted to be attached to the side of a mop bucket for wringing excess fluid from a mop. The wringer assembly comprises a housing having a front wall and forming an upwardly open well for receiving the moping yarns of a mop. A flange projects from the front wall of the wringer housing to a forward edge located beyond the front wall to define the forward-most extend of the wringer assembly. The flange is formed with a recess for receiving the handle of a mop and supporting the handle in an upright orientation over the mop bucket.

Initially, applicant notes that there is no impetus, absent the need to combine these references in light of applicant's

invention, to combine the teachings of these references as the Office Action suggests. The mop handle receiving indentations 15 taught by Robb are formed in the corners of side plates that rest on and support a wringer basket on the rim of a mop bucket. There simply is no reason to provide the modern wringer of Elkington with such a plate because the Elkington wringer is already mountable on a mop bucket by means of hooks 46 and 47 on the back side of the wringer. Additional support in the form of plates or wings supporting the sides of the wringer as taught by Robb simply are unnecessary, redundant, and superfluous. It would therefore not occur to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the Elkington wringer with side wings. For at least these reasons, there is no suggestion found anywhere in the art that the teachings of these two references be combined.

Even if the cited reference were to be combined, they still would not be productive of applicant's invention. The result would simply be a modern wringer with side wings formed with curved or indented edges. Such a combination fails to render obvious applicant's claimed invention wherein a flange projects from the front wall of the housing and extends forward to define the forward-most extent of the wringer assembly, the flange being provided with a recess for receiving and supporting the handle of a mop disposed in the mop bucket, as claimed. Further, applicant's invention, as claimed, is not merely a

design choice but, instead, has advantageous consequences over all of the art of record. One such consequence is that, with applicant's invention, the mop handle is supported in an upright orientation over the mop bucket at all times when the mop is being stored in the bucket. With the prior art devices, the mop handle rests in a groove or clip located at a side of the mop bucket. As a result, the mop handle extends upwardly at a relatively sharp angle and thus projects or hangs over and extends beyond the footprint of the mop bucket. This has several disadvantages. One is that the entire system is unbalanced and prone to tip over, especially when the mop bucket is empty. Another disadvantage is that the mop handle is in the way whenever there is a need to store the bucket and mop in a small tight closet or the like. In these circumstances, the mop handle must be moved out of its resting place and positioned upright, whereupon there is nothing to support it and it is prone to flop over. Thus, applicant's claimed flange located in the mid portion of the wringer front wall as claimed in amended claim 1 is unique and unobvious over the cited art and, accordingly, is allowable over such art.

New claims 13 - 18 depend from amended claim 1 and further define and limit the claimed invention. Accordingly, these claims are also believed to be in condition for allowance. Claim 13 further defines the recess in the flange as being

located midway between the side walls of the wringer to position the mop handle in the center of the mop bucket when is supported in the recess. Claims 14 and 15 further define the flange as being tapered from relatively narrow proportions at its ends to relatively wider proportions at its center with the recess being formed in the relatively wider portion. Claims 16, 17 and 18 further define the shape of the recess and define the flange as being integrally molded with the wringer assembly. None of these claimed features are taught or suggested by the art.

New claims 19 - 22 depend from amended claim 5, which is discussed in detail above. Since claim 5 is believed to be allowable over the art, dependent claims 19 - 22 are also believed to be allowable. In addition, these claims, as claims 13 through 18, also recite unique features of the present invention not taught or suggested by the art of record and are thus allowable over the art in their own right.

Finally, new claims 23 through 27 have been added in order to claim the present invention succinctly and with clarity and precision in view of the official action and references cited therein. These claims are directed to the subject matter of amended claims 1 and 5 and their dependent claims and are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the forgoing discussions relative to such claims. None of the


art teaches or suggests the unique combination of elements recited in new claims 23 through 27.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant acknowledges that the original drawings were informal and will submit formal drawings at the appropriate time. The election of group I, claims 1 - 8, without traverse is acknowledged and affirmed. An IDS including a form "1449" formally citing the references cited in applicant's Petition to Make Special is attached hereto. Applicant acknowledges and thanks the examiner for the amendments made to correct certain typos and informalities in the specification. Amended claims 1 and 5 and new claims 13-27 are believed to define a mop bucket and wringer assembly and improvements thereto of unique construction and attributes not taught or suggested by the art of record. Accordingly, these claims are believed to be

allowable over such art and an early notice of allowability is respectfully and earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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#128444 v1 - Amendment-Mop Bucket with Handle Support